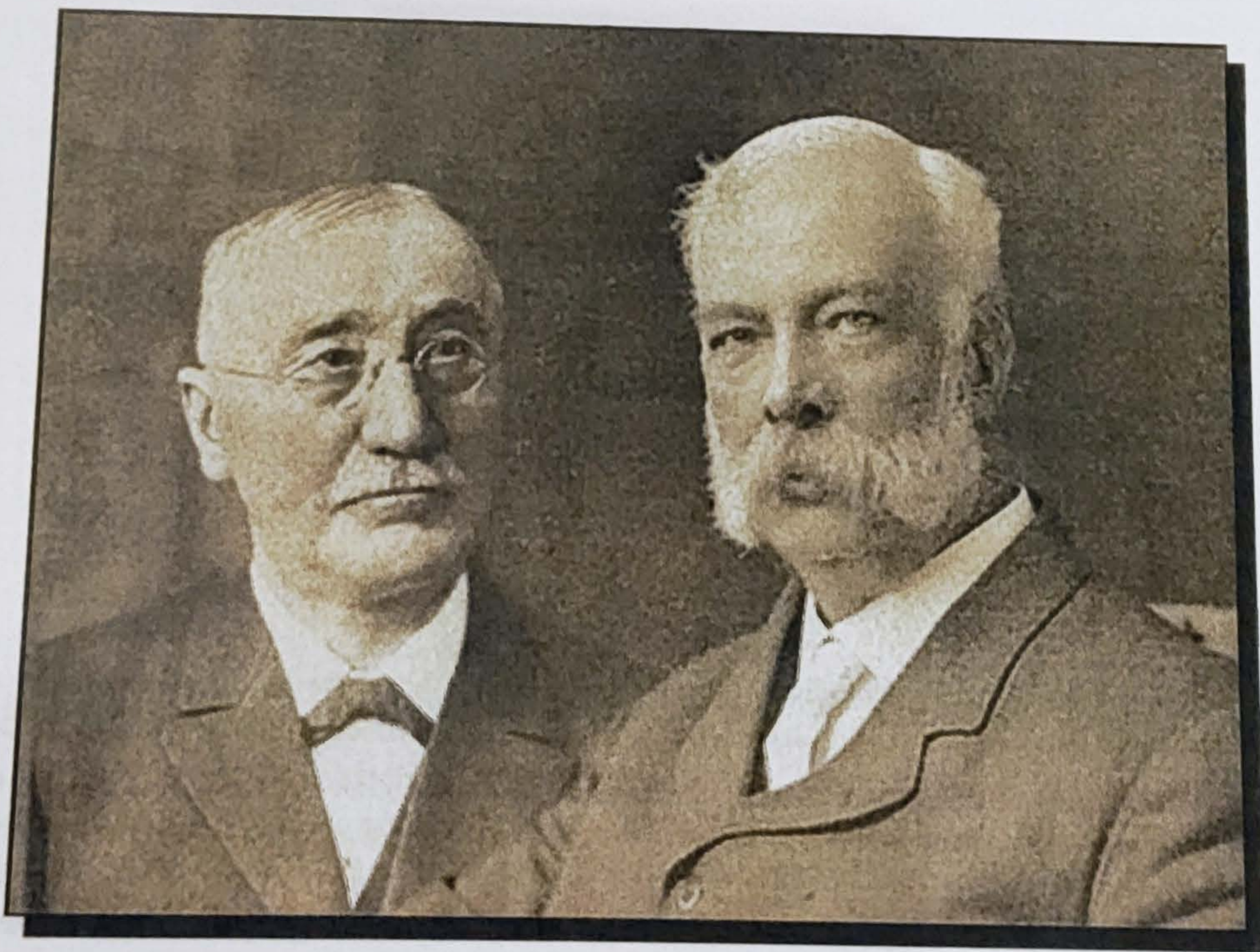


**A COMPLETE HISTORY
OF**

Hammacher Schlemmer

Offering the Best, the Only and the Unexpected since 1848

1848-2008



A COMPLETE HAMMACHER SCHLEMMER HISTORY

SINCE WE OPENED OUR DOORS, HAMMACHER SCHLEMMER HAS OFFERED WHAT COULD NOT BE FOUND ANYWHERE ELSE!



□Hammacher Schlemmer – Offering the Best, the Only and the Unexpected. Perhaps no other retailer has a history as unique as Hammacher Schlemmer or holds such a special place in the hearts and minds of consumers. It was in the pages of a Hammacher Schlemmer catalog that America glimpsed revolutionary items such as the steam iron, the telephone answering machine, the blender – items originally seen as outlandish but became items that changed the way people went about their everyday household tasks. As a company, Hammacher Schlemmer was the earliest of the “early acceptors of new ideas;” as one writer put it, Hammacher Schlemmer was “the midwife” for invention.□



I. The Beginnings: 1848-1860

It is hard today to envision mid-19th Century New York City. Instead of skyscrapers, church steeples penetrated above the rooftops. There was no Brooklyn Bridge, no Statue of Liberty and what would later be Central Park was part of sprawling farmland that stretched between the south end of Manhattan and Harlem. The city was burgeoning. Although business was still centered in the twisting streets of lower Manhattan, wealthy families were moving north into brownstone mansions around Washington Square.

In 1848, the Seneca Fall's Convention laid out its demands for women's rights, Thomas Edison celebrated his first birthday, Louis Tiffany, Paul Gauguin and Wyatt Earp were born, William Makepeace Thackeray published *Vanity Fair*, Marx and Engels published their manifesto, Zachary Taylor was elected the twelfth President of the United States, most of the Western states as well as Alaska were foreign soil, Napoleon II was elected President of France Manhattan Island was assessed at slightly more than sixty million dollars — a far cry from its current assessment of over \$169 billion — and an electric telegraph line was opened between New York and a Chicago which had not existed fifteen years previously. Baseball had first been played on a diamond only three years before and huckster filled the streets announcing their wares with quaint little songs such as "My clams I want to sell today, the best of clams from Rockaway."

The store that would eventually become known as Hammacher Schlemmer also began in 1848 — one of the first national hardware stores — in the Bowery district of New York City. Mr. William Tollner was the sole proprietor and creator of this bustling establishment that specialized in hard-to-find tools. An immigrant from Germany, Tollner was among the many immigrants arriving from Germany and Scandinavia as the industrial revolution in Europe displaced workers from jobs and as the reactionary political system of German-Austrian politician, Prince Klemens Metternich, grew more oppressive.

As the California Gold Rush swept across the nation and the Mexican-American War was coming to an end, gad tongs, floor hatchets, and parlor door hangers were the order of the day at the original Hammacher Schlemmer storefront. No unique or exotic items filled its shelved initially, just high quality tools and equipment.

In the beginning, the store that would become Hammacher Schlemmer — “a gigantic toy store for adults” and “a paradise for gadget hunters”— sold hardware to a young nation full of ambitions and dreams. Less than seventy-five years had passed since the United States had declared and won their independence. While a historic wave of revolutions, starting in France, swept across Europe and significantly altered the political and philosophical landscape, the United States was building and expanding. The Mexican American War, which began in 1846, ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ceded to the United States virtually all of what is today known as the Southwest.

As Americans built bridges, roads, and dams, it relied on the tools that only Hammacher Schlemmer could provide. Carpenters and ironmongers from all over New York City frequented this hardware emporium in order to find exactly what they needed to ply their trade. Whether it was for a Manhattan commercial building or a homesteader looking to build on the frontier, Hammacher Schlemmer was for most, the only source for the right tool, the right nail, or the right wire. From its earliest days in the Bowery, Hammacher Schlemmer gained a reputation as the place to go when an item simply could not be found anywhere else.

The first store occupied the first floor of a four-story structure — the single word, “Hardware” stretched across the front above the door. The store prospered and five years later, in 1853, a 12 year-old immigrant from Germany, William Schlemmer, came to work in “Uncle Billy’s” store. Born in Westphalia, Schlemmer came to America where he found sanctuary and employment at the store that would later carry his name. Making two dollars a week, and sending a dollar of that home to his family, he learned considerably more than the nuts and bolts of the hardware business. Under Tollner’s tutelage, Schlemmer learned what it took to run a store successfully: carry the best quality available, offer only hard-to-find or one-of-a-kind merchandise, personally guarantee each item, embrace innovation and always give each customer exceptional service. Although our merchandise has changed considerably over the decades, our way of doing business remains the same — providing our customers with the “Best,” the “Only” and the “Unexpected.”

The origin of Hammacher Schlemmer as a company name comes not from its founder but from a pair of early investors. Construction was booming and the hardware business increasingly found itself in demand. As a result, Tollner needed to expand to larger quarter to house the increase in inventory and stock. However, he lacked the capital to do so. He found his means in the investor, Alfred Hammacher.

Over the first eleven years after Tollner first founded the store, Alfred Hammacher, a German immigrant and an acquaintance of the Tollner family, joined the enterprise. He invested \$5,000 — and accumulated a half-interest along the way — in a business in which he saw potential. The company name was changed to Hammacher & Tollner in honor of his financial contribution and in 1859, Alfred Hammacher returned to the United States from Germany to see the business that shared his name. Throughout the

early 1860s, Tollner's nephew, William Schlemmer, gradually bought out his uncle's stake in the store. Hammacher and Schlemmer eventually bought out the elder Tollner, setting the stage for growth. By the time Tollner died in 1867, 26 year-old Schlemmer had entered into a partnership with Hammacher. As a result, the company name changed to Hammacher & Co: the "Co" being William Schlemmer.



II. Changes: 1860-1890

The 1860s brought about a move to larger headquarters in the Bowery district, which was enjoying a splendor as the theatrical center of New York, antedating Broadway. Tony Pastor's famous Music Hall was just a few doors from the store and Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale, Adeline Patti, the Italian opera diva and other stars of the stage and concert hall drew capacity crowds.

However, the 60s also brought about the American Civil War, or the War Between the States. Hostilities began in April of 1861 when forces of the newly formed Confederate States — the states whom, angry over a Republican victory in the presidential election of 1860 and the possibility of a ban on the expansion of slavery, ceded from the Union — attacked a U.S. military base at Fort Sumter, South Carolina. The war, the deadliest in American history and also one of the most influential in American history, — it ended slavery, restored the Union and strengthened the role of the federal government — lasted until April of 1865.

As the Civil War began in 1861, there was an increased demand for Hammacher & Tollner's specialty hardware. From 1861 to the end of the fighting in 1865, Hammacher continued to supply Northern manufacturers. However, as a result of the war, New York City was experiencing a severe coin shortage due to the hoarding of both gold and silver — so it was nearly impossible for retailers to make change for their customers. In 1862 and 1863, the U. S. Government allowed merchants to mint their own coins (much like in-store coupons are used today) to exchange during the war. Called "rebellion tokens" or "copperheads," these coins were made out of either copper, brass, copper nickel or lead. Hammacher's tokens, of course, were the best quality available. Business houses flooded the cities with millions of the tokens — there were six to seven thousand known varieties. Abuses of the coining privilege led the Government to put a stop to the practice in 1864 yet few of the tokens ever found their way back to the place of issue to be redeemed for merchandise.

Also during the 1860s, Tollner's nephew, William Schlemmer, began to gradually buy out his uncle's stake in the store. In 1867, Tollner died and Schlemmer entered into a partnership with Hammacher. As a result, the company changed its name to Hammacher & Co.

Intermittently from 1622 to 1890, there were a series of conflicts between the colonial or federal government of the United States and the indigenous people of North America. Named the Indian Wars, these conflicts resurged between 1823 and 1890 west of the Mississippi as expansion into the plains and mountains led to increased fighting with the indigenous tribes. In 1873, as the Comanche Campaign continued — the Comanche Campaign being a military campaign lasting from 1867-1875 and led by Major General Philip Sheridan as a means of rooting out the elusive Indian tribes scattered throughout the border regions of Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, and Texas — the Stock Market experienced a “Black Friday.”

Precipitated by the long running Indian Wars, the bankruptcy of Philadelphia banking firm Jay Cooke and Company and the meltdown of the Vienna Stock Exchange, in September of 1873, the stock market crashed and triggered what has become known as the “panic of 1873.” This severe nationwide depression lasted four years and is one of a series of economic crises in the 19th and early 20th centuries. By 1876, unemployment reached 14% and a total of 18,000 businesses had failed. Businesses all over New York were severely affected but Hammacher & Co. persevered.

On March 10, 1876 Alexander Graham Bell made the first successful call, saying, “Mr. Watson, come here, I want you.” This led to a widespread use and new market full of telephones as well as the typewriter. In response to these changes, Hammacher & Co. began buying and stocking parts and accessories for both the typewriter and the telephone. In 1878, riding the wave of innovation brought by the telephone, Hammacher & Co. was among the first to subscribe to Bell Telephone in New York City, appearing in the first telephone directory (though the name was misspelled).

In the 1880s, the Industrial Revolution was in full stride and Hammacher & Co. welcomed every innovation that would help business run more efficiently. As such commodities as electric lighting, gasoline-powered automobiles, phonographs, steel frame “sky-scrapers,” and the drinking straw were introduced, Hammacher Schlemmer became one of the first retailers to have telephones installed and was among 271 subscribers listed in the Bell Telephone directory.

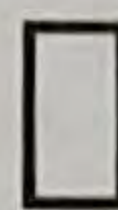
Many artisans emigrating from northern Europe were bringing their own tools with them to America, where they were copied by an abundance of new factories springing up in New England. While manufacturing centered in Connecticut, New York City became the trade center supplying retailers and hardware users up and down the coast as well as westward. With the advantage of its early start and the reputation it had established, Hammacher & Company became known to a widening circle of customers as it sent salesmen out on the road. They needed a catalog as a working tool, and far-off customers needed a catalog from which to order the hardware they needed by mail.

By this point, mass-printing techniques had been greatly refined and there was a more reliable mail delivery service in use. As a result, in 1881, six years before Sears & Roebuck, Hammacher & Co. published, printed and distributed its first hardware catalog. This 1881 catalog is the oldest existing evidence of a printed bound book published by

Hammacher Schlemmer. The first printing was less than 500 copies, a far cry from the vast amount of catalogs now sent all over the globe. In succeeding years, various supplements and updates were published, including some special catalogs devoted to the needs of special industries, as a large part of the business involved working directly with manufacturers and railroads.

One of the most interesting of these early catalogs is the illustrated catalog and price list of pianoforte materials and tools, dated back to 1885. The fold imprinted cover carries the company's full name, and their 209 Bowery address. However, the title page also indicated additional addresses showcasing the growth of the business and the requirement of new spaces — most likely for warehousing — as a result of the newly added merchandise. The 1880s introduced ornate furniture designs and tufted luxury in sofas, chairs and footstools. Upholsterers needed special tools and materials to answer fashion's dictates. These tools they could find at Hammacher Schlemmer's new Upholstery Goods department.

In 1883, the same year in which the Brooklyn Bridge was opened, the firm took its present name, Hammacher Schlemmer. William Schlemmer was now a full partner in the company and his son, William F. Schlemmer, was active in the business.



III. A New Century: 1890-1910

In 1893, the World's Fair, also known as the World's Columbian Exposition opened to the public in Chicago; 1893 also brought about another stock market crash. Known as the "panic of 1893," the crash led to a serious economic depression that was an extension of the "panic of 1873." The crash was caused by railroad overbuilding and shaky railroad financing which then set off a series of bank failures. The "panic of 1893" was the worst economic crisis to hit the nation in its history up to that point and, it is argued, was as bad as the Great Depression during the 1930s. The "panic" led to such notable events as Cozey's Army — a group of unemployed men, embarking on a highly publicized march from Ohio and Pennsylvania to Washington to demand relief — and a wave of strikes, most notably the Pullman Strike which shut down much of the nation's transportation system. Despite the tumultuous economic and social situation of the time, Hammacher Schlemmer continued strong.

Taking advantage of the new technology that was developed during the Industrial Revolution, in 1896, Hammacher Schlemmer's store in New York City became one of the first in the country to have electric lights in the showroom. Later that decade, in 1898, Hammacher Schlemmer incorporated, with both the catalog and store forming a corporation with private stock.

Karl Benz, the acknowledged inventor of the modern automobile first began selling his four-stroke cycle gasoline engine powered automobiles in 1888. In June of 1896, the Ford Quadricycle — the first Ford vehicle developed — was completed. This creation eventually led Henry Ford to build the empire that "put America on wheels." In March of 1898, Robert Allison of Pennsylvania became the first person to buy an American-built automobile — the Winton automobile — which he had seen advertised in *Scientific American*.

By the turn of the century, Mr. Hammacher had retired and the younger Schlemmer had become company director. Business at Hammacher Schlemmer was booming. We stocked over 100,000 items, the largest inventory of hardware on the East coast, but even more unusual than our diverse selection was the manner in which it was displayed — on velvet in mahogany cabinets. It was from these cabinets that Isaac Singer supposedly selected the parts to construct his first sewing machine.

There were no name brands to speak of at the turn of the century and very little advertising. It was the quality of Hammacher Schlemmer's merchandise that brought

satisfied customers back to Hammacher and word-of-mouth that brought new customers in.

In 1902, the same year that Theodore Roosevelt became the first American President to ride in an automobile, and as the automobile gained in popularity and began to come into a slightly more widespread use, Hammacher Schlemmer introduced the first auto parts departments, selling parts and tools for the "horseless" carriage. Despite the fact that there were fewer than 600 automobiles in New York City and no gas stations, Hammacher Schlemmer began to sell their Motorist Touring Kit, which allowed drivers to fix a flat or blown gasket. Hammacher Schlemmer also bought their own automobile, which they used to begin the first home-delivery parcel service for customers — a novel idea in its day.

In 1904, the United States began working on the Panama Canal, the first New Year's Eve celebration was held in Times Square, the first underground line of the New York City Subway opened, the third modern Olympic Games opened in St. Louis, Missouri as part of the World's Fair, also in St. Louis, the ice cream cone was invented during the Louisiana Purchase Exposition and in New York, Hammacher Schlemmer made a move uptown to more spacious quarters. The store now occupied a more spacious and modern building at 13th Street and Fourth Avenue. This new home was on a historic site where New York's first reservoir once stood, drawing water from a well 112 feet deep.

Merchandise was added to reflect consumer demand. For example, pianos were now the favored parlor instrument. As a result, piano parts were sold to piano makers throughout the country and the entire third floor of the store was set aside for "Cabinet and Piano Hardware." Hammacher Schlemmer stocked almost everything that went into an upright or square piano except for the case. The firm was the sole U.S. agent for Smith's patent steel music wire made in England. Sounding boards, brass hinges and casters, special planes, chisels, punches and other tools, clamps, glue pots, even elaborate gold-plated candle holders, or sconces, to illuminate the piano's music rack were included in Hammacher Schlemmer's catalog. For piano maintenance, there were tuners' kits. At one point, 20 boxcar loads a year went to one customer, Kimball Brothers — enough for 12,000 pianos.

Later, piano wire would be recommended for other uses requiring wire of high quality. A regular customer was Alexander Calder, who bought wire to create his celebrated mobiles.



IV. An Evolving Company: 1910-1930

The 1910s was a decade marked by turmoil. In 1912, the British ocean liner RMS Titanic struck an iceberg and sunk, taking with it 1,500 victims. However, also in 1912, Hammacher Schlemmer printed its largest catalog to date. Spanning 1,112 pages and taking a total of four years to compile, the catalog confirmed Hammacher Schlemmer as the most complete hardware source on the East Coast. It became the authoritative reference for hardware of all sorts. One hardbound edition remains housed in the Smithsonian's permanent collection.

World War I, or the Great War, was the first global war. Taking place primarily in Europe from 1914 to 1918, it involved all major global nations as well as their colonies. The immediate cause of the war — though underlying tensions had been brewing for years — was the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, by a Bosnian Serb. The retaliation by Austria-Hungary set off a chain of alliances, which resulted in a chain reaction of war declarations. In less than a month, much of Europe was in a state of warfare. On either side of the dispute were the Entente Powers — France, the United Kingdom, Russia and later Italy and the United States — and the Central Powers — Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. On November 11, 1918 the Entente Powers signed an armistice with the Central Powers, ending the war with an Entente victory.

Two years after the war broke out — and a year before the United States became directly involved — William Schlemmer Sr. died at the age of 75, leaving his son complete control of the company. Schlemmer was remembered as “an indefatigable worker, and a man of the highest possible character, whose habits were exemplary in the extreme, and whose business principles were beyond reproach. He possessed in a peculiar degree the habit of work and often remarked that he was never happier than when

actively engaged in the routine duties of business. He was a never failing example of industry to all who worked with and for him. Always extremely courteous; kindly but firm in manner, approachable always and yet naturally reticent; a keen student of general business affairs, and while always conservative, nevertheless a true optimist."

As customer needs evolved from building supplies like swags, saw bummers, plumb bombs, mortise gauges and pin punches, Hammacher Schlemmer began adding household devices to fulfill America's growing desire for the finer things. William F. Schlemmer, upon taking full ownership of the company after his father's death, continued to lead the change away from hardware to luxury and bath items, delegating building supplies to the basement floor. However, hardware still played a part in the business. In 1918, after the war had ended, Hammacher Schlemmer was commended for its service to munitions factories during the war. The firm was awarded a citation that read: "The War Department of the United States of America recognizes in this award for distinguished service the loyalty, energy and efficiency in the performance of the war work by which Hammacher Schlemmer Co. added materially in obtaining victory for the arms of the United States of America in the war with the Imperial German Government and the Imperial and Royal Austro-Hungarian Government."

In 1917, the February Revolution took place in Russia, seeking to establish a democratic republic and indirectly leading to the fall of the autocracy of Czar Nicholas II. However, the democratic republic did not last and Lenin, following the ideas of Karl Marx, led the October Revolution — also known as the Bolshevik Revolution — marking the beginning of the spread of Communism in the twentieth century. In November, Lenin replaced Russia's short-lived parliamentary government with a government by the Soviets — local councils elected by bodies of workers and peasants. This revolution resulted in the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or USSR. As a result of the revolution and the inner turmoil and civil war it created, Russia, or the USSR, pulled out of World War I.

Hammacher Schlemmer's international renown had grown with its product line and at least one budding Communist considered its collection seminal. According to a company publication, "In 1916, an Emissary from the Russian Czar" — a member of the Russian government's staff — ordered "a lot of everything" to be shipped back to aid his country in 1917. The publication goes on to say that he purchased a sample of every piece of hardware offered to use as manufacturing masters in preparation for the Bolshevik Revolution.

As the war in Europe ended, Americans ushered in the "Jazz Age" or the "Roaring Twenties," a period of economic prosperity. During the period where "normalcy" returned to politics, jazz music blossomed, the flapper redefined modern womanhood and Art Deco peaked. Under "Silent Cal" Coolidge, optimism rose with the stock market. The Florida land boom, the Charleston, Broadway musicals, the Algonquin wits, the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald, and the speakeasies that mocked the Volstead Act were manifestations of the surface sophistication that found its center in New York, or Gotham as those "in the know" loved to call it.

The period was also marked by inventions, unprecedented industrial growth, accelerated consumer demand and aspirations and significant changes in lifestyle. Average Americans in the 1920s became more and more enamored with wealth and everyday luxuries, buying on the stock market as part of a wave of "get rich quick" ideas that flourished in the mindset of post-war America.

In the 1920s, Hammacher Schlemmer had many traveling salesmen traveling throughout the U.S., east of the Mississippi and Canada. It was also during the 20s, that catalog No. 600 was published. In 1971, the catalog was still used as a reference book by the Naval Supply Depots. As American prosperity flourished in 1920, Hammacher Schlemmer began to sell unusual luxury items. It also began its "gnome" campaign, an advertising campaign that featured diligent little cartoons in its pages. In 1923, the same year that Interpol — the International Criminal Police Organization — was established, Hammacher Schlemmer celebrated its 75th Anniversary and the marking milestone of selling 100,000 different products.

In 1926, Hammacher Schlemmer moved to its present location at 147 East 57th Street. This twelve-story building was built specifically for Hammacher Schlemmer and still stands today. The move dramatically changed the merchandise assortment offered. The new location put Hammacher Schlemmer in proximity to Manhattan's most elegant residential neighborhoods, and thus, Manhattan's most elegant residents. These new patrons wanted luxury items, so hardware was relegated to the basement and esoteric gadgetry, gizmos and housewares for "the man who had everything" were added. Mr. Schlemmer even helped to develop some of the products, including Caviar Servers and Telephone Stands.

Thanks, in part, to these changes, Hammacher Schlemmer entered into a new dimension of the consumer consciousness, attracting worldwide fame and praise for its rare products and quality service — and consequently attracting a steady stream of the rich and famous. According to Cosmopolitan Magazine (February 1979), the final years of the 20s "... ushered in an era of Hammacher Schlemmer elegance. Each morning before opening time, uniformed porters dusted every inch of glass shelving with chamois. A doorman in tailcoat stood ready to hand customers in and out of their limousines. The staff was required to dress in dark suits and starched white collars."

Hammacher Schlemmer was becoming known as an entertaining place to shop as well as browse for the serendipitous, so much so that in 1929, Hammacher Schlemmer became the inspiration for a Broadway show tune composed by Howard Dietz entitled, "Hammacher Schlemmer, I Love You." The song included such stanzas as:

"Hammacher Schlemmer, I Love You –
You're Like a Sweetheart to Me –
Hammacher Schlemmer, Above You
No Other Firm E'er Could Be.
Your Business Deserves Devotion

That Is Loyal –
I Love You Just Like a Fellow
Loves His Goil –
So Always Remember –
Hammacher Schlemmer – I Love You.

Hammacher Schlemmer, I Love You
Roebuck and Sears, I Adore You
If You Want To Buy A Bassinette Or Buy A Hog
Don't Be in A Fog, Use Our Catalogue
Hammacher Schlemmer You're Sweet And Dear
Hammacher Schlemmer I Repeat Dear
Macy's And Gimble's Have Plenty of Thimbles
But I Love You."



V. Era of Inventions: 1930-1960

In October of 1929, the stock market experienced a collapse of stock values. The crash was not a one-day affair but rather spanned over three days known respectively as Black Thursday, Black Monday and Black Tuesday. The initial crash occurred on Thursday, but the catastrophic downturn on Monday the 28th and Tuesday the 29th precipitated widespread panic. The Wall Street Crash of 1929 was the most devastating stock market crash in the history of the United States once the full scope and longevity of its fallout is taken into consideration — the Great Depression being the most important of these. The stock market crash and the resulting Great Depression marked the beginning of a decade of high unemployment, poverty and deflation. It wasn't until the onset of the war economy of World War II — beginning around 1939 — that the Great Depression is believed to have ended.

However, the 30s was also a time of technological advances including the construction of the world's tallest building at the time — and for the next 43 years — the Empire State Building. Also introduced in the 1930s was the first Color Sound Cartoon, air mail service across the Atlantic Ocean, Radar — called RDF, or Radio Direction Finding —, nuclear fission and the Volkswagen Beetle — arguable the most popular automobile in the world — which had its roots in Nazi Germany in the late 1930s.

Despite the onset of the Great Depression, Hammacher Schlemmer was able to maintain its business. Perhaps it was because something from Hammacher Schlemmer provided relief from the pervading gloom, or because many of its customers, even after being wrung out in the stock market, still had relatively large amounts of money left.

The 1930s was a time of Hammacher Schlemmer introductions. These inventions were the first of their kind — oddities that would eventually be regarded as household “necessities.” In 1930, when Herbert Hoover was President, the “Blondie” comic strip began, and “Hoovervilles” began springing up in cities around the country, Hammacher Schlemmer introduced the first Pop-Up Toaster in the country. Also introduced by Hammacher Schlemmer was the first Portable Radio (However, unlike the credit card sized model sold today, it weighed 30 pounds!) In 1931, the first Hammacher Schlemmer houseware catalog came into circulation, the first of its kind in the country. In 1934, Hammacher Schlemmer introduced the first Electric Dry Shaver and began offering the first Electric Food Processor — the Waring Blender, created by musician Fred Waring — in the pages of its catalog.

In 1935, Miss Palmer was hired as the store’s first female salesperson, which for the times was a rather bold and somewhat scandalous employment practice. Breaking the all-male tradition on the selling floors, she was soon followed by a number of attractive young women with social savoir-faire. Among the first customers she waited upon happened to be Lord Rothschild, who dropped in to buy an outdoor thermometer for one dollar. After walking around the store with Miss Palmer, Lord Rothschild left after spending \$500 worth of merchandise, including a wild goatskin blanket-and-pillow set for \$350. When he got back to England, he called to order two more sets in pink.

The 1930s also brought about an abrupt shift to more radical and conservative lifestyles, as countries struggled to find a solution to the Great Depression. In Germany, a country still recovering from the ravages of World War I and the reparations demanded from the Treaty of Versailles, Adolf Hitler took advantage of the overall desire for change and led the rise of Nazism. As the decade progressed, Nazi Germany began its steady march towards war, effectively breaking from the Treaty of Versailles. The Nazi Government began passing anti-Semitic laws, rearming and rebuilding its military and conquering its surrounding territories using a mixed strategy of appeasement and its new method of warfare — Blitzkrieg.

In 1936, in protest of the Nazi Regime sweeping across Germany and the surrounding countries, Hammacher Schlemmer stopped buying German products. This continued until the end of World War II in 1945. In 1939, amidst the beginning of World War II and the German invasion of Poland, Dominic Tampone, later a president of Hammacher Schlemmer, was recognized as top salesman.

The United States entered the war in 1941 following the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor in the early morning hours of December 7th. On June 6, 1944 — more commonly known as D-Day— the invasion of Normandy began, commencing the Western Allied effort to liberate mainland Europe from the Nazi occupation. On May 7, 1945 Germany surrendered and on August 6th and 9th respectively, the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrendered on August 15th and the war officially ended on September 2, 1945. 1945 was also the year in which William F. Schlemmer died at the age of 67 and left his wife, Elsie, in charge of the company.

The end of World War II also brought about the beginnings of the Cold War — the period of conflict, tension and competition between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies — which lasted until the early 1990s. It was during this period, the beginnings of the Cold War, that, three years after the death of William F. Schlemmer, Hammacher Schlemmer celebrated its 100th Anniversary. Also in 1948, Hammacher Schlemmer introduced the first Automatic Steam Iron and Amazing Electric Broom.

For more than 100 years, Hammacher Schlemmer had been a family held-business. However, in 1953, Elsie Schlemmer, widow of William F. Schlemmer, sold the company — and left her estate to Hammacher employees — to a group of investors, David Berdon and Co. They proved to be unsuccessful in comprehending the unique appeal of Hammacher. So, they in turn sold the company to John Gerald in 1955. Gerald vowed to restore customer care and returned the company to its carriage trade roots. Dominic Tampone served as his litmus test for procuring uniquely “Hammacher” items. Having joined the company as a stock boy back in the late 20s, he knew what set Hammacher Schlemmer apart from the mainstream: that mix of the practical along with the whimsical.

The 1950s in the U.S. are generally considered conservative — mass suburban developments and nuclear family ideals serving as symbols of the era. Education grew explosively as the demand for high school and college education increased. The 50s revolutionized entertainment with the mainstream introduction of television, rapid growth of the recording industry, new genres of music and movies targeted at teen audiences. The 50s reflected a sharp rise in the economy for the first time in almost 30 years. As a result, Americans returned to the 1920s-type consumer society built on credit and boom-times.

By the mid-50s, hardware was totally discontinued at Hammacher Schlemmer in favor of more upscale merchandise with the renewed emphasis on being the “first” to offer the “Unexpected.” However, store officials pointed out that luxury was not the only criteria (for products), rather, 98% of the items are functional, unusual, high-priced and are known for their novelty. An example? In 1955, Hammacher Schlemmer introduced the first Electric Toothbrush.

As the 50s came to a close, Elsie Schlemmer died (1956) and bequeathed \$473,000 to her employees. Later, in 1959, Dominic Tampone was made president of the company after Gerald stepped down.

VI. A Changing Brand: 1960-1980

The 1960s denote a complex of inter-related cultural and political trends. The term "The Sixties" is used descriptively by historians, journalists, and other objective academics; nostalgically by those who participated in the counter-culture and social revolution; and pejoratively by those who perceive the era as one of irresponsible excess and flamboyance. The decade was marked by sexual revolution, drug use and psychedelic music, anti-war movements, civil rights movements and a rising counter-culture marked by cultural radicalism, hippies and such musical imports as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones.

In 1960, Hammacher Schlemmer was sold to the Kayser-Roth Corporation. In this decade of social and cultural revolutions, Hammacher Schlemmer and its New York Store began selling the first Home Bowling Alley, London Taxi Cabs and the first "Nothing Box (1962)" — they did nothing but flash lights in a random sequence. In 1964, Hammacher Schlemmer sold 24 London Taxi Cabs — which had been purchased and refurbished — for \$1,895 each. In 1965, First Lady Claudia "Ladybird" Johnson called in Hammacher Schlemmer to redecorate the White House closets, following a precedent of Presidential customers. In 1968, Hammacher Schlemmer introduced America to the first "Telephone Valet" — now commonly known as an answering machine — and the Radarange Microwave Oven for home use.

Tampone created a wholesale operation in the early 1960s that quickly grew into Hammacher Schlemmer's Invento Products Corporation. In 1962, Invento was created as a subsidiary for inventing and product development. Invento soon evolved into a clearinghouse for the new and unusual, sourcing items from around the world and selling them under its own namesake brand. It sold goods not only to Hammacher Schlemmer but also to such major national retailers such as Sears and Neiman Marcus. By the end of the decade, Invento was generating annual sales of about \$2.5 million.

In a September 1968 profile in Merchandising Week, Dominic Tampone described the typical Hammacher Schlemmer item, "It's brand new...it could be too

clever in concept for looks. It could be like a Rube Goldberg contraption. But the idea is good and it serves the purpose for which it is intended." Rube Goldberg was an American cartoonist who is best known for his series of popular cartoons depicting Rube Goldberg machines, complex devices that perform simple tasks in indirect, convoluted ways. The cartoons contained a character named Professor Lucifer Gorgonzola Butts and his crazy inventions, which would later be simply known as Rube Goldberg inventions. Once such invention was the "Self-Operating Napkin" which is activated when the soup spoon is raised to the mouth, pulling the string and thereby jerking the ladle, which throws a cracker past the parrot. The parrot jumps after the cracker and his perch tilts, upsetting the seeds into a pail. The extra weight in the pail pulls a cord which opens and lights an automatic cigar lighter thus setting off a skyrocket which causes a sickle to cut a sting and allow the pendulum with attached napkin to swing back and forth, thereby wiping chin.

The 1970s were also known as the "Me Decade." The focus shifted from the social activism of the Sixties to social activities for one's own pleasure: drug use, all-night dancing at the newly emerging discotheques and swing parties. At Hammacher Schlemmer, the 70s were preceded by a decade of Hammacher offerings that had never been available for home purchase, including a Regulation-Sized Bowling Alley and restored London Taxi Cabs. The 70s would bring even more Hammacher Schlemmer "firsts," yet one of our biggest sellers was the "Doggie Doolie," a septic tank for canine waste. Only at Hammacher!

In 1971, Hammacher Schlemmer introduced the Rovaphone, the first cordless telephone and in 1973, the Hammacher Schlemmer catalog began to sell the first coffee machine — Mr. Coffee. In 1975, Gulf and Western bought Hammacher Schlemmer. In 1976, the first Cuisinart food processor was sold by Hammacher Schlemmer and in 1977, Hammacher Schlemmer printed its first full color catalog.



VII. Modernizing Times: 1980-2000

The 1980s saw social, economic and general upheaval as well as wealth, production and a migration of western culture to new industrializing economies. The 80s were characterized by increased telecommunications and a rapid growth in video game technology. The 80s also witnessed the addition of two stores to the Hammacher Schlemmer repertoire, one in Chicago and one in Beverly Hills. Hammacher Schlemmer also broke new ground by being one of the first catalog/retailers to have a presence on the Internet.

In 1980, The Bradford Group, head by J. Roderick MacArthur, purchased Hammacher Schlemmer from Gulf and Western for an undisclosed sum. MacArthur, a prominent Chicago businessman and entrepreneur, personally enjoyed trying out new items in the New York City store — whether it was a recumbent bicycle, talking scale or solar-powered pith helmet. Today, Hammacher Schlemmer continues under the ownership of the MacArthur family.

The company's reputation for carrying outlandish, extravagant, and expensive products continued to grow, driven by such products as \$139,000 "bionic dolphin" personal submarines, \$39,000 home ski slopes, and \$34,000 model train sets. Hammacher Schlemmer's unconditional guarantee of satisfaction clearly inspired a great deal of confidence in its customers. However, high-priced, "gee-whiz" articles such as these were little more than attention getting devices for Hammacher Schlemmer. Long-running favorites were far more down-to-earth: electric shoe buffers, portable clothing steamers, ultrasound jewelry cleaners, and air cleaners. Furthermore, while the prices of its most widely publicized items were often sky-high, the cataloger's annual sales totaled less than \$35 million at the end of the 1980s.

Hammacher Schlemmer Institute

In 1983, MacArthur started the Hammacher Schlemmer Institute. It is an independent, but affiliated, branch of the Hammacher Schlemmer Company whose sole purpose is to comparative test top-of-the-line products. Products are tested under laboratory conditions, home- or field-tested. Products are tested according to rigid

methodology and standards. From a reasonably wide range of competing products, analysts select the ones that are superior. After comparison testing of products within a specific category — personal care items, electronics, air quality items, home goods — the model receiving the highest rating based on superior function, ease of use and quality is awarded the Institute's coveted "Best" rating.

To evaluate products for a Hammacher Schlemmer Institute "Best" designation, a variety of test methods are used. The Institute uses its own expertise, nationally accredited laboratories, experts and consultants, and its own customer-testing panel to determine "Best" products. To ensure objective opinions, brand names are hidden. A staff of analysts check manufacturer's claims, do consumer panel tests of products, do external laboratory testing and conduct side-by-side comparisons of like products on the marketplace. For tests that require the careful scrutiny of the Institute's research team, the Institute conducts controlled comparison evaluations. For example, to rate umbrellas for wind resistance, they were mounted to the rear end of an automobile and taken for a ride at 45 mph; bird feeders were set up outdoors and videotaped for 50 hours, and every bird that landed was tallied. Throughout the course of the tests, analysts take detailed notes about each product's performance and measure data using calibrated equipment and systematic methods. All products are objectively rated on specific attributes such as ease of use, durability, and functionality.

In addition to testing done by the Institute, qualified experts in a particular field are enlisted. It is important, for a select number of tests, for the Institute to seek out experts and professionals with specialized knowledge who can provide unique insight into a product category. Experts are used when an advanced knowledge of the product category is needed, or a high skill level is required to evaluate the products under consideration. For example, Charlie Trotter, a renowned chef, tested 7 different oyster openers in his famous Chicago restaurant; to test computerized chess games, the help of an international Chess Grandmaster was enlisted; to test corkscrews, the help of a prominent sommelier at a local restaurant was enlisted.

The Institute also enlists the help of independent laboratories. Certain product categories require the Institute to use the services of certified, independent testing laboratories. Laboratories follow established testing standards and procedures for specific product categories, and have specialized, calibrated equipment not readily available anywhere else.

In 1991, the Institute introduced its Customer Testing Panel. Since its inception, the Panel has tested thousands of products in hundreds of product categories. By using actual customers to test the products, the Institute can determine if the products perform the same after repeated usage. After an introduction in the category by a member of the Institute team, panelists use each product (with the brand names hidden) as if they were home. Panelists read through a product's directions, follow the steps necessary to use the product and rate the different models according to performance. While the Customer Testing Panel came to an end in the early 2000s, the Institute is looking to reinstitute it in

the form of an E-Panel which would ask for customer opinions which would be used to set testing criteria.

With so many choices open to the consumer, it is a service offered to help make buying decisions easier. The Hammacher Schlemmer Institute becomes more important to the consumer as the world becomes smaller through the Internet. With access to more products, the consumer has more to consider, and the Institute becomes a tool to buy only the "Best." The consumer can come to Hammacher Schlemmer and buy these products, trusting that the Institute has researched and tested them for quality.

That year, 1983, Hammacher Schlemmer also unveiled the World's Smallest, Lightest Pocket Television. In 1984, the company opened its first store outside of New York, on Chicago's famed North Michigan Drive. Two years later, in 1986, its third store opened on North Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, California. Both of these locations offered customers the opportunity to see the latest additions to the Hammacher Schlemmer line.

In 1988, Hammacher Schlemmer teamed up with CompuServe to sell products online, becoming one of the first retailers to go on the Internet. CompuServe, also known by its acronym CIS, was the first major commercial online service in the United States. Dominating the field throughout the 1980s and remaining a major player through the mid-90s, it was sidelined by the rise of information services such as AOL that charged monthly subscriptions rather than hourly rates.

Like many other catalogers, Hammacher Schlemmer rode a cresting wave of mail-order success in the 1980s and early 1990s. As baby-boomers entered their peak earning years, they found themselves with more disposable income and less time to spend it in malls and shopping centers. Many — in response to this change — turned to catalogs as a convenient way to shop without leaving the house, and mail-order houses were quick to oblige them. The catalog industry in general benefited tremendously from these trends in the 1980s, as mail-order sales increased more than 300 percent during the decade. Catalog sales constituted about three-fourths of Hammacher Schlemmer's total revenues by 1989, up from 40 percent in 1968. The company's overall sales grew as well, nearly tripling from an estimated \$70 million in 1992 to about \$190 million in 1996.

The 1990s saw racial prejudice losing moral acceptance and the gender roles for women beginning to increase dramatically in many industrialized countries. During this time, widespread adoption of personal computers, the Internet and the increased economic productivity led to the equity market booms around the world, and made many living in America, Asia and Western Europe very wealthy. The 90s also saw the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August of 1990 and the monumental event — German reunification in October of 1990 as a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In 1991, the Soviet Union broke up, successfully ending the Cold War — though many feel that the war ended years before.

While the classic Hammacher items — like the Pants Presser, Sleep Sound Generator and Heated Towel Rack — secured a place in the catalog, Hammacher Schlemmer continued its reputation for “firsts” in the 1990s with the Hand-Held Paperless Fax Viewer and the distinction of being the longest continuously published catalog in America. In 1994, Hammacher Schlemmer introduced the first Integrated Caller ID & Answering Machine.

Also in '94, Hammacher Schlemmer opened up an exhibit at Disney's latest addition to their Epcot Theme Park, Innoventions. The Innoventions pavilion focused on technological advancements and their practical applications in everyday life. A portmanteau of the words “innovation” and “invention,” Innoventions first opened in 1994 and prominently displayed SEGA Genesis and “virtual reality” displays, which were basically more advanced video games at the time. Hammacher Schlemmer's exhibit ran until September of 1997.

In 1994, Hammacher Schlemmer created Search for Invention. Over the years, Hammacher Schlemmer had been fortunate to introduce to the public a number of products that were ahead of their time and have since become indispensable parts of daily life. It had become apparent to various members in the company that while there was a lot of publicity for innovation in the areas of computers, electronics and communications, there was woefully little attention given to inventors of household devices that solve everyday problems.

As part of the tradition of introducing products that are ahead of their time but indispensable, Hammacher Schlemmer introduced an annual contest called the Search for Invention. Designed to recognize struggling inventors in the United States, Search for Inventions held an annual competition for inventors. Search for Invention provided inventors with an opportunity to present their ideas to a broad audience and sought out the items that are the only one of their kind, items found nowhere else, and items that solve problems as no other can — the typical Hammacher Schlemmer staple. Each entry was required to have a working patent and their invention was not to be in mass production. September of every year, Search for Invention held a major media event in New York to present the “new fangled” ideas that could possibly become the household necessities of the future. The inventors were present and a winner was announced, allowing the inventors — and the winner — to spend valuable time with the national media. Winners included: an Electric Powered Adjustable Wrench, a Solar Oven, a Free-Standing Adjustable Ladder, a Refrigerated Veg-e-Jar, and a “Timeless” Container — a vacuum device for storing valuable memories. However, Search for Invention was later put on hiatus.

Continuing in its transition to the Internet age, Hammacher Schlemmer teamed up with Prodigy in 1990. Similar to CompuServe, it was easier to navigate, more aesthetically pleasing and capable of showing rudimentary pictures of products. Prodigy — Prodigy Communications Corporation — was an online service which offered its subscribers access to a broad range of networked services including news, weather, shopping, bulletin boards, games, polls, expert columns, banking, stocks, travel and a

variety of other features. The company claimed it was the first consumer online service, differentiating itself from CompuServe — Hammacher's original online source — because of its graphical interface and basic architecture. By 1990 it was the second largest online service provider, with its 465,000 subscribers trailing only to CompuServe's 600,000.

In 1993, Hammacher Schlemmer teamed up with NiftyServe. This Japanese based company was experimenting with kiosks placed throughout shopping malls that would display a retailer's merchandise. While this worked well in Japan, it never took off in the U.S. market and in 1996, Hammacher Schlemmer left the project. In 1995, America Online built a Hammacher Schlemmer store on the Internet. America Online, also known as AOL, is an American global Internet services and media company. They have franchised their services to companies in several nations around the world. AOL allows millions of customers around the world to access the world's largest "walled garden" online community.

In 1998, Hammacher Schlemmer celebrated its 150th Anniversary. In honor and recognition of Hammacher Schlemmer's longevity and history, New York City renamed the block on 57th Street between Lexington and 3rd Avenue "Hammacher Schlemmer Way." Also in 1998, the First Recordable Compact Disc Player was introduced. In 1999, Web sales reached 18 billion dollars.



VIII. The Wave of the Future: 2000-Present

The 2000s have been dominated by topics such as international trade, concern over energy supplies and global warming and the explosion in telecommunications. Advancements made in technology have been as revolutionary and diversified as previous decades. Advancements made in the field of digital electronics have been considerable. Computers continue to advance rapidly with graphical capability and hard drive space driving computer enhancements. Other electronic marvels of the 2000s included the widespread use of broadband Internet, mobile phones, digital cameras, and digital music and data storage formats such as iPods. E-mail is no longer a luxury, but a communication necessity. Social networking websites such as Facebook and Myspace have given people the opportunity to easily stay in touch with others. Use of Internet commerce has also become widely popular, with travel reservations, stock trading, and retail shopping taking place online, but also without an intermediary agent — online commerce has made the twenty-first century the era of self-service.

Hammacher Schlemmer entered the 2000s on solid ground. Determined to maintain its reputation for offering new and cutting edge products, the company teamed up with PatentCafe to create a Fast-Track Product Review program that expedited the concept-to-store process for new inventions. For the first time in its history, the company relied on an outside firm to review new consumer-created products that would possibly end up in the famous Hammacher Schlemmer catalog. With the popularity of online commerce, by 2003, Web sales for Hammacher Schlemmer had surpassed \$100 billion.

By now the company's main product categories included electronics, leisure and recreation, travel, home office, automotive, kitchen, garden, patio and pool, children's toys, memorabilia, furniture, decorative accessories, and apparel. New products such as the Folding Strolling Pet Carrier, the Feline Drinking Fountain, and The Three-Step Pet Staircase hit catalog pages in 2004. Another best-selling product was the Progression Wake-Up Clock, which gradually wakes up a sleeper with light, aroma, and nature sounds. The company's new garden-related products included The Upside-Down Tomato Garden, The Umbrella Greenhouse, The Effortless Motorized Wheel Barrow, and The Hover Mower.

By 2005, the company's online sales had been increasing at a rate of 30% each year for the past three years and online sales accounted for one-third of the company's revenue. With the web-based side of the company becoming such a productive aspect, it was clear that the retail stores were not able to keep up. The Chicago-based retail location closed its doors, and company headquarters moved to its present location in the suburbs — Niles. The Beverly Hills store was also shut down, leaving only the landmark store in New York City.

Moving twice before its present location in the heart of Midtown Manhattan's shopping district, the Hammacher Schlemmer store has maintained its reputation for products that are "sine qua non" for the discriminating customer. Out of the landmark store, Hammacher Schlemmer offered the public twelve floors — today only two floors are used for selling, the remainder are leased out — of household furnishings, personal items, electrical appliances, and the "first" of many products available to consumers. Over the years, royalty, heads of state, celebrities and captains of industry — including Queen Elizabeth II, Howard Hughes, Michael Jackson and John F. Kennedy — have made the store the landmark that it is today. The store reflects a museum with only a single version of each item gracing the shelves. However, different than most museums and stores, Hammacher Schlemmer invites its customers to try out its wares. The store even maintains its original Dumbwaiter system, sending stocked items down to the selling floor.

In 2008, Hammacher Schlemmer celebrated 160 years of Innovation and providing customers with "the Best, the Only and the Unexpected." Hammacher Schlemmer's focus for the future continued to be on providing exciting products that met its customers' needs. Hammacher Schlemmer prides itself on offering items which are the "only one that do what they do." It is this merchandising concept that gave the store its reputation as "purveyor of the unusual, provider of the unique (The Wall Street Journal)," "a paradise for gadget hunters (The New York Times)," and "a store as unique as its name (The Los Angeles Times)."

Today, Hammacher Schlemmer publishes over 12 catalog editions every year that are delivered to customers on every continent. A tradition of service, commitment to the unique, a flair for the creative and an almost magical, mythical mystique — all define and describe the Hammacher Schlemmer experience. Over the years it has entertained, delighted, and served, always keeping a consistent focus on its products, always looking for the next unique item to make a difference to our customers. It is a commitment the company was built upon and a commitment that exists to this day.



IX. Hammacher Schlemmer's Store

The locations of Hammacher Schlemmer's various storefronts over the last 160 years are so rich in historic interest that even William Schlemmer argued, "a few words regarding them would not be remiss." Hammacher Schlemmer first began as a hardware store at 221 The Bowery, where it remained from 1848-1859. It later moved to 209 The Bowery, remaining from 1859 to 1904.

The Bowery originated in 1639 as one of the grants made by the Dutch East India Company, and was known as "The Great Bouwerie." It was the largest and most desirable grant and was included in the "Stuyvesant Plantage." The Stuyvesant estate extended from Broadway to the East River and from Fifth to Seventeenth Street. The estate was home to Peter Stuyvesant, the Governor from 1647-1664. In 1777, his mansion was burned to the ground amid rumors that a British spy started the fire.

The famous yellow fever plague of 1822 ascribed to impure water, desolated lower Manhattan and caused business and terrified inhabitants to move "out of town to Greenwich Village." There were no sewers — each house had its own "pit." Garbage was ordered to be pit in 'neat heaps bi-weekly in the center of the street for collecting." Pigs did most of the collecting as they were allowed everywhere and were considered necessary. There were about twenty thousand pigs and their territory was unlimited.

As there was no individual water supply, water was furnished by numerous wells with pumps — some in the middle of Broadway. "Choice" water was carted around in large casks by hucksters. At last an extensive "reservoir" was planned, and in 1836, a well one hundred and twelve feet deep and sixteen feet in diameter distributed water through twenty-five miles of mains to two thousand homes. It was located on the exact spot where Hammacher Schlemmer resided from 1904-1926 — 13th Street & Fourth Avenue.

The "New York & Harlem Railroad" passed the 13th Street location of Hammacher on the street that at the time was called the Bowery. The railroad continued to White Plains. The fashionable school of William Forrest (later known as Forrest and Quackenbos) — where many well-known New Yorkers of past generations were educated — was located down the street.

From here, the company moved into its present location at 147 East 57th Street, in 1926. Located on the sight of the famous Huntington Stables and near the famed Park Avenue, the modern twelve-story building has housed hardware, gifts, housewares, bath, dressing room and closet furnishings, kitchen and fireplace equipment, furniture and a vast array of the gadget and gizmos that have made Hammacher Schlemmer so famous. Amid posh art galleries, fashionable boutiques and the bustle of midtown Manhattan, Hammacher Schlemmer stands, offering the world's most elegant and useful items.



X. Conclusions

Founded in 1848, Hammacher Schlemmer has aimed to preserve its belief in providing uncompromised quality and exceptional service for the past 160 years. William Schlemmer, one of the original investors for which the company receives part of its name, believed that running a successful store required a simply formula: carry the best quality available, offer only hard-to-find or one-of-a-kind merchandise, personally guarantee each item, embrace innovation and always give each customer exceptional service. While our merchandise has certainly evolved — The World's Smallest Humanoid Robot being a far cry from the nuts and bolts of the original hardware business — our way of doing business has remained the same.

The corporate philosophy at Hammacher Schlemmer has always been to give consumers an innovative way to solve everyday problems with unique, top quality products. We have aimed at making progress and innovation a way of life. For the past 160 years, we have diligently practiced this philosophy, serving as a window to the future by introducing such innovative products as the pop-up toaster, the microwave oven, and even the portable radio. In fact, what makes Hammacher Schlemmer unique is its ability to spot new gadgets before progress turns them from luxuries into necessities. Once a product catches on in a big way and begins to be sold at other retailers, Hammacher Schlemmer usually discontinues it. Doing so keeps with their strategy to sell products that are unique and keeps carefully in mind who their customers are. They are looking for products that solve some problem or perform a special task in a unique manner.

Customer service on a personal basis is a cornerstone of Hammacher Schlemmer's success. If Hammacher Schlemmer doesn't have an item a customer wants, it is willing to search for it. Special installations or deliveries are arranged. Throughout its long history, Hammacher Schlemmer has aspired to offer its customers service second to none. It's tradition of service, commitment to the unique and flair for the creative has come to define the Hammacher Schlemmer experience. It is a commitment the company was built upon and a commitment that exists to this day.

For 160 years, Hammacher Schlemmer has sought to offer unusual products not commonly available, products that perform better than all others, and products of the highest quality that are the only ones that do what they do. Hammacher Schlemmer has

always believed that the unusual should be exceptional, and the exceptional should be the norm. It is Hammacher Schlemmer's independent spirit that makes it stand out from every other retailer in America.



A Comprehensive Timeline 1848-2008



Year	Events
1848	- The store that will become Hammacher Schlemmer opens in the Bowery district of New York City as a hardware store specializing in hard-to-find tools. - Mr. William Tollner was the sole proprietor of one of the first national hardware stores, which became known as the place to go when an item simply could not be found anywhere else.
1853	William Schlemmer arrives in America from Germany at the age of 12 and starts working at "Uncle Billy's" store.
1859	- Alfred Hammacher, a German immigrant and acquaintance of the Tollner family, invests \$5,000 in the company and accumulates a half-interest. - Hammacher returns to America to see the business that shares his name — Hammacher & Tollner.
1860s	This decade found the company with a new partner in the firm, Alfred Hammacher, and larger headquarters in the Bowery district. The Civil War increases demand for our specialty hardware, as we continue to supply Northern manufacturers. However, because of the war, New York City experiences a severe coin shortage due to the hoarding of both gold and silver — so it is nearly impossible for retailers to make change for their customers. That's why in '62 and '63, the government

	allows merchants to mint their own coins (much like in-store coupons are used today), known as "rebellion tokens" or "copperheads." The coins are made out of either copper, brass, copper nickel or lead. Hammacher's tokens, of course, are made from the best quality available — copper.
1862/3	The United States government, in response to a severe coin shortage, gives Hammacher & Tollner permission to mint their own coins to exchange during the ongoing Civil War.
1867	William Schlemmer purchases his uncle's share of the business and becomes a partner in the company; as a result, the company name changes to Hammacher & Co.: the "Co" being William Schlemmer.
1873	The stock market's "Black Friday" and resulting panic damages businesses all over New York, but Hammacher & Co. perseveres.
1876	Facing a new market full of typewriters and telephones, Hammacher & Co. adapts by buying and stocking parts and accessories for both.
1878	Hammacher & Co. is among the first companies to subscribe to Bell Telephone in New York City.
1880s	The Industrial Revolution is now in full stride and Hammacher & Co. welcomes every innovation that we believe will help our business run more efficiently. We are among the first retailers to have electric lights and telephones installed. (In 1878, we were among only 271 subscribers listed in the New York City Bell Telephone directory.)
1881	In 1881, we mark the first known printing and distribution of our first Hardware catalog.
1883	The firm takes its present name, Hammacher Schlemmer, as William Schlemmer is now a full partner and his son, William F. Schlemmer is now active in the business.
1893	The stock market crash and resulting panic — thought to be just as bad as the Great Depression — affects the economy, but Hammacher Schlemmer continues strong.
1896	The New York City Hammacher Schlemmer store becomes one of the first stores in the country to have electric lighting in the showroom.
1898	Hammacher Schlemmer incorporates and both the catalog and the store form a corporation with private stock.
1900s	By the turn of the century, Mr. Hammacher had retired and now the younger Schlemmer was company director. Business is booming and in 1904, another move was made uptown to more spacious quarters. Again, merchandise is added to reflect consumer demand. For example, pianos are now the favored parlor instrument, so piano parts are sold to piano makers throughout the country — twenty boxcar loads a year go to one customer, Kimball Brothers. We also sell parts and tools for the "horseless" carriage when there are fewer than 600 automobiles on the streets of New York City. We also purchase an automobile for company use and begin a home-delivery parcel service for our customers — a novel idea. We stock over 100,000 items, the

	largest inventory of hardware on the East coast, but even more unusual than our diverse selection is the manner in which it is displayed — on velvet in mahogany cabinets. It is from these cabinets that Isaac Singer selected the parts to construct his first sewing machine.
1902	The first auto parts department opens along with the first home delivery service by automobile, both part of Hammacher Schlemmer.
1904	Hammacher Schlemmer moves to a new and larger building down the street.
1905	The U.S. Navy uses the company's catalog as an equipment manual — it was still used in 1971.
1912	Hammacher Schlemmer prints its largest catalog to date spanning 1,112 pages. One hardbound edition is housed in the Smithsonian's permanent collection.
1916	William Schlemmer Sr. dies and leaves his son, William F. Schlemmer, complete control of the company.
1917	An Emissary from the Russian Czar orders "a lot of everything" to be shipped back to aid his country.
1918	Hammacher Schlemmer is commended for its service to munitions factories during World War I.
1920s	- In 1926, Hammacher Schlemmer moves to its present location at 147 East 57th Street and our merchandise assortment changes dramatically. Our new location puts us in proximity to Manhattan's most elegant residential neighborhoods. These new patrons want luxury items, so hardware is relegated to the basement and esoteric gadgetry, gizmos and housewares for "the man who has everything" are added to the store. Mr. Schlemmer even helps develop some of the products including Caviar Servers and Telephone Stands. - Hammacher is becoming known as an entertaining place to shop as well as browse for the serendipitous, so much so that in 1929 we are the inspiration for a Broadway show tune entitled, "Hammacher Schlemmer, I Love You." One of its stanzas includes the following: "If You Want to Buy A Bassinet or Buy A Hog/ Don't Be in A Fog, Use Our Catalogue/Hammacher Schlemmer You're Sweet and Dear..." - Also during the 1920s, Hammacher Schlemmer has many salesmen traveling throughout the U.S., east of the Mississippi and Canada.
1920	Hammacher Schlemmer's "Gnome" campaign begins, featuring diligent little cartoons used in advertising.
1923	75th Anniversary celebration from Hammacher Schlemmer and the marking milestone of selling 100,000 different products.
1926	The New York store moves to 57th Street, into the twelve-story building where it still remains today.
1929	Howard Dietz composes the song "Hammacher Schlemmer I Love You."

1930s	In 1930, Hammacher Schlemmer introduces the American public to the Pop-Up Toaster. The toaster will be among the many inventions we will offer that are the first of their kind — oddities that will eventually be regarded as household “necessities.” This decade will prove to be full of Hammacher Schlemmer introductions: the first Portable Radio (However, unlike the credit card size model we sell today, it weighed 30 pounds!); the first Electric Dry Shaver; and the first Kitchen Blender. Hammacher Schlemmer will also hire the store’s first female salesperson — which, for the times, is a rather bold and somewhat scandalous employment practice.
1930	Hammacher Schlemmer introduces the first Pop-Up Toaster.
1931	The first Hammacher Schlemmer houseware catalog comes out — the first of its kind in the country.
1934	Hammacher Schlemmer introduces the first Electric Dry Shaver and begins offering the first Electric Food Processor.
1935	Miss Palmer becomes the first female salesperson at the store on 57th Street.
1936	In protest of the Nazi regime and its actions in Europe, Hammacher Schlemmer stops purchasing German products until the end of World War II in 1945.
1939	Dominic Tampone — who will later become president of the company — is recognized as top salesman.
1945	William F. Schlemmer dies at the age of 67; upon his death he leaves his wife Elsie in charge of Hammacher Schlemmer.
1948	Hammacher Schlemmer celebrates 100 years; this is also the year that Hammacher Schlemmer introduces the first Automatic Steam Iron and the Amazing Electric Broom.
1950s	- For more than 100 years, Hammacher Schlemmer has been a family-held business. However, in 1953, Elsie Schlemmer, widow of William F. Schlemmer, sells the company (and leaves her estate to Hammacher employees) to a group of investors. They prove unsuccessful in comprehending the unique appeal of Hammacher. So, they in turn sell to John Gerald who returns the company to its carriage trade roots. Dominic Tampone serves as his litmus test for procuring uniquely “Hammacher” items. Having joined the company as a stock boy back in the late 20s, he knew what set us apart from the mainstream: that mix of the practical along with the whimsical. In the late 40s, he had helped usher in the Steam Iron and the Electric Broom. In this decade, he will help introduce the Cordless Toothbrush and the Wok to our customers. - By the mid-50s, hardware is totally discontinued in favor of more upscale merchandise with the renewed emphasis on being the “First” to offer the “Unexpected.” Also in the 50s, Dominic Tampone becomes president.

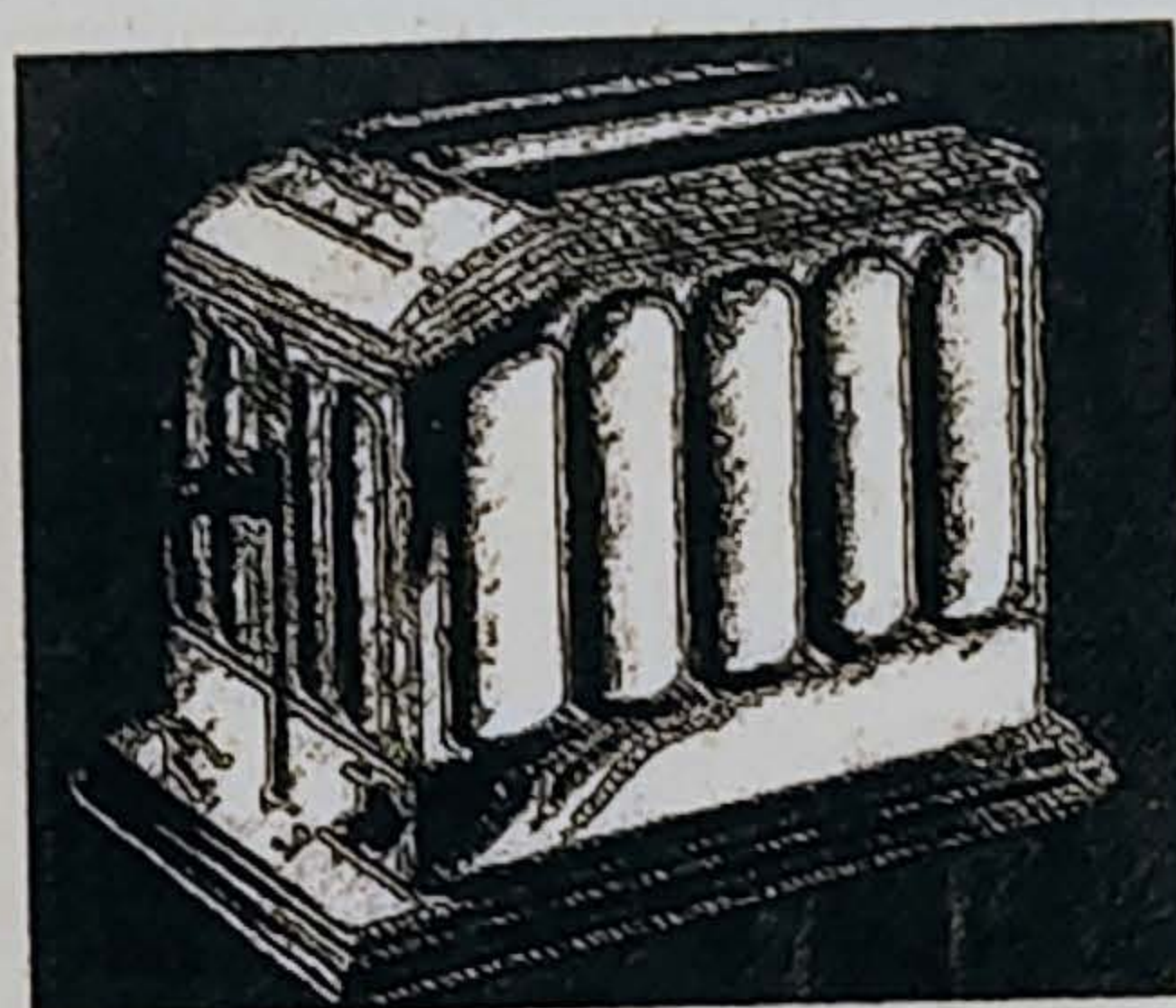
1953	Hammacher Schlemmer is no longer a family-held business as it is sold to a group of investors, David Berdon and Co.
1955	John Gerald purchases Hammacher Schlemmer from David Berdon and Co. and vows to restore customer care and return to Hammacher Schlemmer's carriage trade roots. Also in 1955, the first Electric Toothbrush is introduced.
1956	Elsie Schlemmer dies and bequeaths \$473,000 to her employees.
1959	Dominic Tampone becomes president of Hammacher Schlemmer after John Gerald steps down.
1960	Hammacher Schlemmer is sold to the Kayser-Roth Corporation. Also in 1960, Hammacher Schlemmer purchases London Taxi Cabs for resale in our catalog and store.
1961	The New York Hammacher Schlemmer store sells its first Home Bowling Alley and its first "Nothing Box."
1962	Invento Products is created as a subsidiary for inventing and product development for Hammacher Schlemmer.
1964	Hammacher Schlemmer sells 24 of its London Taxi Cabs for \$1,895 a piece.
1965	First Lady Claudia "Ladybird" Johnson has Hammacher Schlemmer redecorate the White House closets — one of many first ladies to do so.
1968	Hammacher Schlemmer introduces the first "Telephone Valet" — it is now known as an answering machine. Also introduced in 1968, is the Radarange Microwave.
1970s	- The 70s were preceded by a decade of Hammacher offerings that had never been available for home purchase, including a Regulation-Sized Bowling Alley and restored London Taxi Cabs. We also sold the first Microwave Oven for home use and the "Telephone Valet," now commonly known as an answering machine. The 70s would bring even more "firsts": Mr. Coffee, the Cuisinart Food Processor as well as the cordless telephone. One of our biggest sellers was the "Doggie Doolie," a septic tank for canine waste. Only at Hammacher! - Also in the 70s, Hammacher was sold to Gulf and Western and then later to J. Roderick MacArthur, a prominent Chicago businessman and entrepreneur. He personally enjoyed trying out new items in the New York City store — whether it was a recumbent bicycle, talking scale or solar-powered pith helmet. Today, Hammacher Schlemmer continues under the ownership of the MacArthur family.
1971	The cordless telephone is available at Hammacher Schlemmer.
1973	Hammacher Schlemmer starts selling the first "Mr. Coffee" coffee machine.
1975	Gulf and Western purchase Hammacher Schlemmer.
1976	Hammacher Schlemmer sells the first Cuisinart Food Processor.
1977	Hammacher Schlemmer prints its first full color catalog.
1980s	The 1980s witness the addition of two stores, one in Chicago and the

	other in Beverly Hills. We break additional new ground by being one of the first catalog/retailers to go on the Internet with CompuServe. In the mid-80s, we establish the Hammacher Schlemmer Institute. It is an independent, but affiliated, branch of our company whose sole purpose is to comparative test top of the line products. With so many choices open to the consumer, it is a service we offer to help make buying decisions easier. Products are tested under laboratory conditions, home- or field-tested. For example, to rate umbrellas for wind resistance, they were mounted to the rear end of an automobile and taken for a ride a 45 mph; bird feeders were set up outdoors and videotaped for 50 hours, and every bird that landed was tallied. Every product in our catalog with a "Best" designation has our guarantee that it has been thoroughly tested to be the "Best" in its class.
1980	• The Bradford Exchange, headed by J. Roderick MacArthur, purchases Hammacher Schlemmer from Gulf and Western for an undisclosed sum.
1983	• MacArthur starts the Hammacher Schlemmer Institute for testing. In 1983, we also unveil the World's Smallest, Lightest Pocket Television.
1988	• Hammacher Schlemmer is one of the first retailers to go on the Internet with CompuServe.
1990s	• While the classic Hammacher items — like the Pants Presser, Sleep Sound Generator and Heated Towel Rack — secured a place in our catalog, the "firsts" continued with: an Integrated Caller ID & Answering Machine, Hand-Held Paperless Fax Viewer and the first Recordable Compact Disc Player. Then we celebrate another first — the longest continuously published catalog in America. Mr. Tollner and young William Schlemmer would be amazed at how the merchandise has changed — from cogs to a fully functional carousel. Still, what has not and will never change is our commitment to the "Best"...the "Only"...and the "Unexpected."
1994	• Hammacher Schlemmer introduces the first Integrated Caller ID & Answering Machine; in 1994, we also join Disney's Innoventions exhibit at Epcot.
1995	• America Online builds Hammacher Schlemmer a store on the Internet.
1998	• The company celebrates its 150th Anniversary and record web sales; the first Recordable Disc Player is also introduced and New York City renames the block on 57th Street between Lexington and 3rd Avenue "Hammacher Schlemmer Way."
2000s	• Hammacher Schlemmer enters the 2000s on solid ground. Determined to maintain its reputation for offering new and cutting edge products, the company teams up with PatentCafe to create a Fast-Track Product Review program that expedited the concept-to-store process for new inventions. For the first time in its history, the company relies on an outside firm to review new consumer-created products that could possible end up in the famous Hammacher Schlemmer catalog.

	•
2005	• The company's online sales have increased 30% each year for the past three years and online sales now account for one-third of company revenues.
2008	• Hammacher Schlemmer celebrates 160 years of Innovation.



Hammacher Schlemmer "Firsts"



Year	First
1862-3	Was one of the first companies to issue "Rebellion Tokens" during the Civil War
1878	Among first 271 subscribers listed in New York City Bell Telephone directory
1896	One of the first in the country to have electric lighting in showroom
1899	First home delivery service driven by automobile
1930	Pop-Up Toaster
1930	Portable Radio
1931	First houseware catalog (first for Hammacher, and first of its kind in the country)
1934	Electric Dry Shaver
1934	Waring Blender (in the 30s Fred Waring created this unusual device because his wife's illness meant that she could only eat mashed foods)/Electric Food Processor
1935	Miss Palmer is the first female salesperson at the store on 57 th Street
1948	Automatic Steam Iron
1948	Electric Broom
1955	First Electric Toothbrush

1966	Home Rowing Alley
1966	"Dinning Box"
1968	"Telephone Vatel"- Answering Machine
1968	Radarange Microwave Oven
1971	Cordless Telephone
1973	Mr. Coffee
1976	Cuisinart Food Processor
1977	First full color catalog for Hammacher Schlemmer
1994	Integrated Caller ID & Digital Answering Machine
1998	Recontable Compact Disc Player
	Hand-Held Paperless Fax Viewer
	Electric Can Opener
	Stainless Steel Kitchenware
	Schick Razor
	Satom Hotray
	Home Freezer
	Mechanical Ice Crusher
	Plug-In Intercom
	Card Shuffler
	Martini Mixer
	Battery-Operated Radio
	Battery-Operated Toothbrush



Royalty, Presidents & Celebrities



From its earliest days in the Bowery as a specialty hardware store, we were known as the place to go when an item simply could no be found anywhere else. Czar Nicholas (circa 1914) never doubted the veracity of this statement: when he visited our store he purchased one of everything from drill bits to Chamferer Gauges. He was just one of many famous personages in search of the "Best," the "Only" and the "Unexpected," who have patronized our store and catalog over the years. For example, King Hassan of Morocco once spent \$28,000 in just one afternoon in our New York City store. His purchases included a half-scale replica of a Model T Ford, Jet-Propelled Surfboards and a Hot Dog Vender's Cart — the latter still available in our stores today.

Visits to the United States by past and present members of the British royal family, including the Queen Mother, often included a stop at the 57th Street store. The Duke of Windsor had a penchant for flashlights and bought them in every shape and variety. Other royal patrons have included the King and Queen of Spain and Princess Grace of Monaco.

In 1965, two Carving Knives from Hammacher Schlemmer were integral props in the Hitchcock movie "Torn Curtain" and the contribution prompted a personal thank you letter from Mr. Hitchcock's desk to then president of Hammacher Schlemmer, Dominic Tampone. Recently, a popular blockbuster movie star ordered one of our Amphibious Cars.

Since the time of Herbert Hoover's term in office, most U.S. presidents have visited Hammacher Schlemmer. Hoover seemed especially taken with Bar Accessories; Roosevelt favored our Jelly Molds; Eisenhower, and a world famous rock group, liked our "Nothing Boxes" (they did nothing but flash lights in a random sequence) and Kennedy purchased an Electric Bed. Hammacher was often called in to repair that bed because a certain young boy liked jumping on it! Both Ladybird Johnson and Pat Nixon consulted Hammacher Schlemmer when renovating the closets in the White House.

A Whiskey Decanter on Air Force One — with an automatic shot measurer — came from Hammacher. And, more recently, the store provided bedside Zitzmann Silver Thermal Carafes and a large Commercial Steamer for the Blair House, the guest resident of the White House.

Whether it was an Elephant Gong for J. Edgar Hoover, Piano Wire for Calder's mobiles, or a cliff-side Elevator for a Brazilian industrialist, Hammacher Schlemmer has always been prepared to provide the "Unexpected" for discriminating clientele.

Other notable clientele:

Royalty

The Duke of Windsor (collection of unusual corkscrews)
 The Duchess of Windsor (yearly visits from '30s through 1975)
 Princess Margaret
 The Queen Mother (picture frames and candle sticks)
 Queen Elizabeth II
 The Shah of Iran
 The Saudi Family of Saudi Arabia (1970s)
 Prince and Princesses from both Morocco and Jordan (shop here often)
 President of France

Families

Agelli family of Italy (owners of Fiat)
 Chrysler family
 Du Pont family
 Fords
 Mellon family
 Motts
 Morgan family
 Rockefellers

Actors/Actress

Ed Gordon
Ed Bradley
Bill Cosby
Tina Louise (actress from Gilligan's Island)
Sydney Pollack
Leslie Stahl
Ingrid Bergman (actress in Casablanca, Anastasia)
David Brenner
Yul Brynner (actor in The King and I, The Ten Commandments)
Jill Clayburgh (shot a movie scene in front of Hammacher Schlemmer in April 1980)
Joan Crawford
Greta Garbo
Katherine Hepburn (a custom-built table)
Jerry Lewis
Anthony Quinn
Cicely Tyson
Robert Deniro (shops here all the time)
Veronica Hamel (actress in Hill Street Blues)
Terrance Howard (actor in Mr. Holland's Opus)
David Blaine
Eric Estrada (actor in Chips)
Bradley Whitford (actor in The West Wing, Billy Madison)
Bill Murray
Sigourney Weaver (actress in Alien)
Susan Sarandon
Kevin Klien
Baldwin Brothers
Shirley McClaine
Brad Garrett
Sinbad
Meryl Streep
Stedman Graham
Kerri Clarke (Dick Clarke's wife)

Musicians

The Beatles (purchased hundreds of Nothing Boxes)
Frank Sinatra
Michael Jackson
Luther Vandros (R&B singer)
Beyonce's Parents

Whitney Houston's Father (bought Wurlitzer Jukebox for Whitney)

Politicians

Harry S. Truman

Dwight D. Eisenhower (Nothing Box)

John F. Kennedy

Lyndon B. Johnson

India Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (1970s)

J. Edgar Hoover (1939-a cheese set, chutney and champagne taps)

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger

Pres. Bush sister-in-law (she buys his birthday presents here)

Societal Elite

Jackie and other members of the Kennedy clan

Nelson Rockefeller

Mrs. Vincent Astor

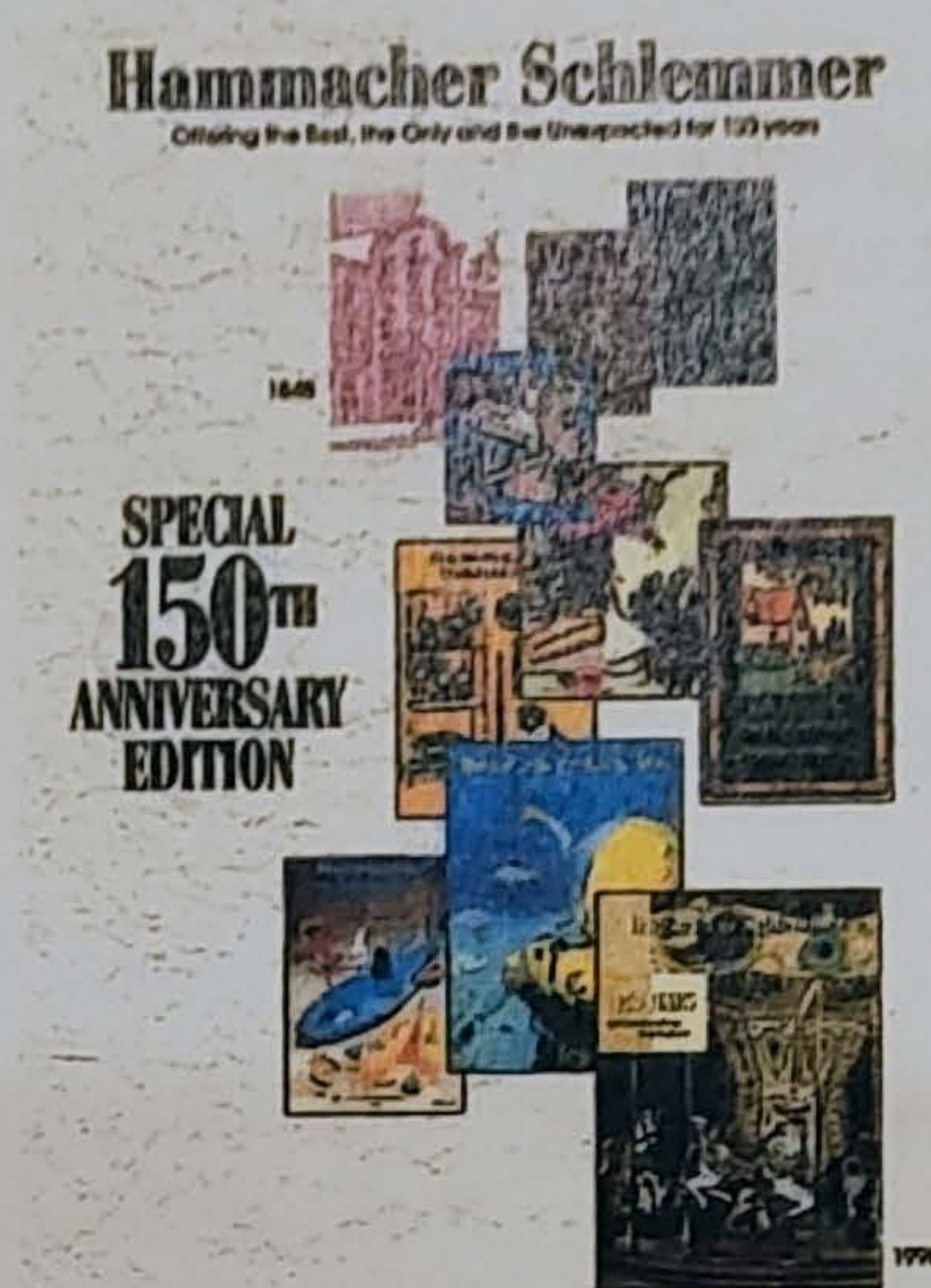
Howard Hughes

R.J. Reynolds

The Vanderbilts

Owner of the Toronto Blue Jays

Catalog Insert 150th Anniversary



Since we opened our doors, Hammacher Schlemmer has offered what could not be found anywhere else!

1848- Gad Tongs, Floor Hatchets, and Parlor Door Hangers, not Pants Pressers, Sleep Sound Generators, or 2-Man Submarines, were the order of the day at our original storefront in the Bowery. Carpenters and ironmongers from all over New York City frequented this hardware emporium to find exactly what they needed to ply their trade. Back then, the sole proprietor of this bustling establishment was a Mr. William Tollner.

Five years later, a 12 year-old immigrant from Germany, William Schlemmer, came to work in "Uncle Billy's" store. For a salary of two dollars a week, he learned considerably more than the nuts and bolts of the hardware business. Young Schlemmer learned what it took to run the store successfully: carry the best quality available, offer only hard-to-find or one-of-a-kind merchandise, personally guarantee every item, embrace innovation and always give every customer exceptional service. Although our merchandise has changed considerable over the decades, our way of doing business remains the same--providing our customers with the "Best," the "Only" and the "Unexpected."

And the story of innovation continues...

FROM THE BOWERY TO BUCKINGHAM PALACE



From its earliest days in the bowery as a specialty hardware store, we were known as the place to go when an item simply could not be found anywhere else. Czar Nicholas (circa 1914) never doubted the veracity of this statement: when he visited our store he purchased one of everything from drill bits to Chamferer Gauges. He was just one of many famous personages in search of the "Best," the "Only" and the "Unexpected," who have patronized our store and catalog over the years. For example, King Hassan of Morocco once spent \$28,000 in just one afternoon in our New York City store. His purchases included a half-scale replica of a Model T Ford, Jet-Propelled Surfboards and a Hot Dog Vendor's Cart--the latter still available in all of our stores today.

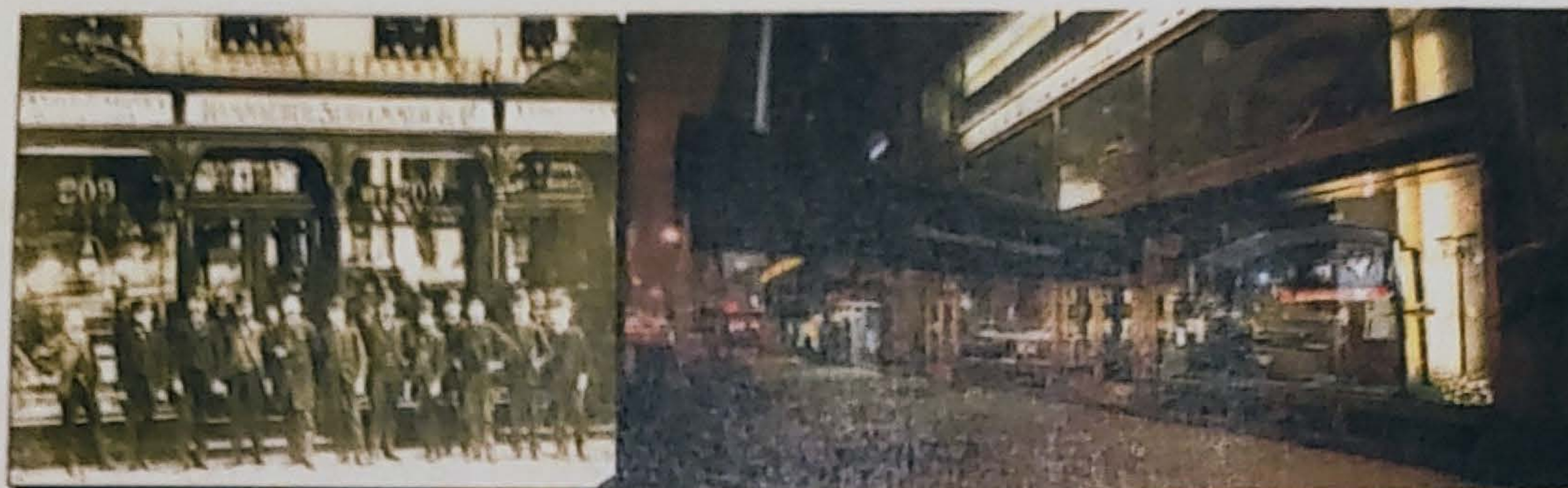
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THEN & NOW

From a small specialty hardware store in the Bowery district of New York City, we've come quite a long way since 1848--and it has been a remarkable journey. Hammacher Schlemmer now has three retail stores and two electronic storefronts on the World Wide Web. We issued our first catalog in 1881, six years prior to Sears & Roebuck, and we are still the longest continuously published catalog in America. Our first printing was less than 500 copies, while today we publish over 12 catalog editions every year that are delivered to our customers on every continent.

The merchandise we carry has evolved through the years to mirror the most progressive changes in our society. Although no longer an emporium catering to skilled tradesmen in need of the tools like Knurls and Auger Bits, we still offer functional excellence--hundreds of new products every year that are "sine qua non" for the discriminating customer.

At the turn of the century, there were no brand names to speak of and very little advertising. It was the quality of our merchandise that brought satisfied customers back to Hammacher and word-of-mouth that brought new customers in. Our absolute commitment to quality has never changed over the years, which is why everything we offer carries an Unconditional Guarantee.

We have much to celebrate, and all of us at Hammacher Schlemmer would like to take this opportunity to thank you for being a part of our success. As we look to an equally exciting and auspicious future, we will continue to offer you the "Best," the "Only" and the "Unexpected."



Free Standing Insert
150th Anniversary



Since 1848, Products Unique As Their Name

Perhaps no other retailer has a history as unique as Hammacher Schlemmer or holds such a special place in the hearts and minds of consumers. One of the first national hardware stores and one of America's very first catalog merchandisers, Hammacher Schlemmer has consistently surprised, intrigued and ultimately satisfied a worldwide audience with products that can only be described as "the Best, the Only, and the Unexpected." Since 1848, it has served as more than just a retailer of fine and innovative products- it has served as a window to the future: the pop-up toaster, the portable radio, the electric razor, the microwave oven, even the first flat U.S. panel television- all were first introduced by Hammacher Schlemmer, long before the average consumer conceived of these eventual daily necessities.

In fact, if there is a corporate philosophy at Hammacher Schlemmer, it is to give consumers an innovative way to solve everyday problems with unique, top quality products. And for more than 150 years the institution has practiced this philosophy. Products that were initially intriguing are now found in almost every home in America.

Purveyors of the Unique

In the beginning, the store that would become Hammacher Schlemmer sold hardware to a young nation full of ambitions and dreams. As America built bridges, roads, dams, it relied on the tools and supplies that only Hammacher Schlemmer, then located in the Bowery in New York City, could provide. Whether it was for a Manhattan commercial building or a homesteader on the frontier, Hammacher Schlemmer was for the most, the only source for the right tool, the right nail, or the right wire. In short time, it earned a deserved reputation for the place to go for "hard to find" items. It is a reputation that persists to this day. Whether it is a two-person submarine, a flat panel television or a sound-sending bird feeder, Hammacher Schlemmer has introduced products that solve everyday problems for just about everyone.

Offering more than 400 items at its three store locations in New York, Chicago and Beverly Hills, California, and through its famous monthly catalog, Hammacher Schlemmer prides itself in offering items which are the "only ones that do what they do," quotes The Wall Street Journal. The New York Times called it "a paradise for gadget hunters." To The Los Angeles Times, it's "a store as unique as its name." This tradition of unique merchandise coupled with world-class service has attracted-and thrilled-presidents and princesses, as well as millions of satisfied customers the world over.

From the Bowery to the Boulevards

Like all American success stories, the dream started small. Hammacher Schlemmer opened its doors in 1848 when William Tollner, a German immigrant, opened an unpretentious hardware store in lower Manhattan, better known as the Bowery. No unique or exotic items filled its shelves initially, just high quality tools and equipment. The store prospered and when Tollner's twelve-year-old nephew, William Schlemmer, arrived from Germany, he was immediately given a job selling tools in front of the store.

Soon Alfred Hammacher, and acquaintance of the family, joined the enterprise, investing \$5,000 in a business in which he saw potential. Gradually, Hammacher and Schlemmer bought out the elder Tollner, setting the stage for growth. By 1883, the store became officially known as Hammacher Schlemmer & Company.

By the early 1900s, Hammacher Schlemmer had established the largest inventory of tools and hardware in the East. Its flair for the progressive also surfaced in a unique way- it began selling automotive parts and tools before there were any service stations, despite the fact that there were only 600 "horseless carriages" in all of New York.

Hammacher Schlemmer's penchant for innovative retailing took hold before the turn of the century, however. It was one of the first businesses in America to install electric lighting. And, in 1878, the store was listed among the initial 271 subscribers in the first New York City telephone directory. In 1881, the company became a catalog merchandiser. Today, the Hammacher Schlemmer catalog is the longest continuously published in America.

As customer needs evolved from building supplies like swags, saw bummers, plumb bobs, mortise gauges and pin punches, Hammacher Schlemmer began adding household devices and luxury items to fulfill America's growing desire for the finer things. William Schlemmer's son, William F., took over full ownership of the company upon his father's death in 1916 and continued to lead this change away from hardware to luxury and bath items, delegating building supplies to the basement floor. He also added a distinctive feel and look of elegance to the store: every customer was greeted by a doorman donned in tailcoat and was attended to by a staff dressed in dark suits and starched collars.

Thanks, in part, to these changes, Hammacher Schlemmer entered into a new dimension of the consumer consciousness, attracting worldwide fame and praise for its rare products and quality service and consequently attracting a steady stream of the rich and famous.

The company's popularity was underscored by a hit Broadway song, "Hammacher Schlemmer, I Love You," that captured the growing love affair America had with its favorite retail stores. Ownership of the company finally left the Schlemmer family in 1953, passing onto a series of corporate owners. Today, the company is privately held. In 1984, the company opened its first store outside of New York, on Chicago's famed North Michigan Avenue. Two years later, its third store opened on North Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, California. Both of these locations offer customers the opportunity to see the latest additions to the Hammacher Schlemmer line.

Showing America the Possibilities

Since 1848, Hammacher Schlemmer has been synonymous with innovations and quality. It was in the pages of the Hammacher Schlemmer catalog that America glimpsed revolutionary items such as the steam iron, the telephone answering machine, the battery-operated toothbrush, the microwave oven and the pop-up toaster. It sold the first electric can opener, the first electric pencil sharpener, the first blender, the first food processor and the first automatic coffee maker, changing the way people went about their everyday household tasks.

The Hammacher Schlemmer Lifetime Guarantee

Unconditional and Unwavering

Service Second to None

Hammacher Schlemmer has helped change the way we live, adding convenient in ways once though unimaginable. Throughout its long history it has remained committed to finding and offering the world's most innovative products. To this end, The Hammacher Schlemmer Institute was created in 1983. This associated, but independent, organization tests and rates hundreds of competing products, looking for the select few that will earn the ultimate Hammacher Schlemmer endorsement- The Best. This designation means that in side-by-side comparison testing of many similar products, the product demonstrate superior performance.

Other service policies that set this unparalleled retailer apart? A full unconditional guarantee which means just that. Customers can return any product at any time, no questions asked, for a full refund or credit. And, everything-including batteries, adapters and special plugs- is included for customers' convenience.

A tradition of service, commitment to the unique, a flair for the creative and an almost magical, mythical mystique- all define and describe the Hammacher Schlemmer experience. For more than 150 years it has entertained, delighted, and served, always keeping a consistent focus on its products, always looking for the next unique item to make a difference to out customers. It is a commitment the company was built upon and commitment that exists to this day.



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